

Thomas Russell Junior School

'Ambitious culture, strong team ethos, outstanding academic achievement, high expectations, exemplary behaviour' Ofsted 2019.



Newsletter



Issue No. 37

Headteacher: Mrs S Sharpe

19th June 2020

Baby News...

I am delighted to finally be able to share with parents the wonderful news that Miss Branson is expecting her first child. Her and her partner expect to welcome their new baby into the world around mid-November. I am sure you can appreciate being pregnant during this time carries additional risks and worries, hence the reason Miss Branson was not in school at the height of the pandemic and is not currently teaching any classes.

We know you will join us in wishing her all the very best for the remainder of her pregnancy and we look forward to being able to keep you updated with more exciting news!



Thomas Russell Junior School



Rainbow Learner

Rainbow Learners

We are delighted to see the Zoom lessons continue to be incredibly well attended and have a very positive impact on children's learning. Our awards this week go to:
Bella P, Emilia B, Lily C, George C, Seth B, Kaitlin W, Ciaran C,
Flora & Georgia H and Evie W.

Fabulous work and effort from these children this week!

Today marks 13 weeks (91 days) in Lockdown.

The vast majority of you have now had your children at home for longer than two back-to-back summer holidays.

You have kept them entertained, despite the fact you haven't been allowed a single holiday, day trip, theme park visit or even trip to the cinema.

You have cared for and nurtured them without being able to call on family and friends for an hour's peace, a sleep over, a play date or a bit of free babysitting.

You have fed and nourished them – and boy that's been a full time job in itself!

You have turned your hand to teaching assistant supporting the Daily Doodles, tech support helping with Zoom lessons, gym instructor joining Joe Wicks in his morning workout and semi-professional photographer documenting their amazing endeavours.

You've honed your negotiation skills, ridden the wave of emotions that you and your child(ren) will have experienced, coped with tears and tantrums, listened to more news reports and statistics than ever before and maybe realised a few things about yourself too.

Hopefully there have been more highs than lows - you've learned things about your children that you didn't know, you've enjoyed sharing skills and talents that you'd never found time to do before, you've spent more time as a family; exercising, learning, cooking and in the garden.

We want you to take a moment to reflect on your amazing achievement, because that is what this is - AMAZING.

That is what you are - AMAZING.

That is what your **children** are – **AMAZING** 😊❤️

You will be remembered as the generation who home schooled for nearly 6 months and you should be very proud of that achievement.

If you feel like there were times you felt like you really hit rock bottom – be kind to yourself – rock bottom is a great place from which to lay a secure foundation and begin to rebuild.

Rather than focusing on what your children missed out on by not being at school, try to think about what they gained by being at home.

If you're worried about your child falling behind, try not too... behind what?... the whole country / world has been in the same situation.



And this is where TRJS comes back in...

We have already made huge steps forward in planning our return to school in September. We are determined every child will be back to school as fully as we can possibly accommodate right from the very beginning of the term.



We have a few plans running concurrently which we will adjust based on the scientific evidence and guidance from the Government, but our first priority is our children and getting them **ALL** safely back.

We understand that there can be huge anxiety around new classes and new teachers at this time of year. We have decided that there has been so much change and insecurity already that we want to make getting children back in to school as smooth as possible, so children will be moving up in the two main classes they have been in this year.

You will hear much in the press over the coming weeks and months about 'catch up' programmes, the Recovery Curriculum and the huge number of children who have been 'damaged' by school closures.

We want to assure children and parents that we will be doing everything we can to support our children academically, but also socially and emotionally after this time away from school, to re-engage with their friends and teachers, to adjust to the new 'normal' and to take all of their best bits from home-learning and combine them with the best bits of classroom routines.

We have high expectations for our children in terms of behaviour and academically. We know that when we return some children will slip back into routines very easily from day one, others may take a few days or weeks to adjust, and some will take much longer and need more individual support.

We are also acutely aware that the experiences of different children and families will have varied greatly over the last few months. To avoid unnecessary pressure on the children from any formal testing and ability grouping, we have made the decision to teach in three small mixed ability classes for a short period (likely one term) when the children return from Lockdown, whilst we evaluate the impact and effect it has had on all children, support them to get back into routines, identify any gaps that may have opened up and begin to address them and indeed pinpoint any children who have really thrived on the home learning experience.

Next year's staffing teams will be:

Year 3 – Mrs Vardy, Mrs Jones, Mrs Kerr-Delworth, Mrs Graves (TA) and 2 new TAs

Year 4 – Mrs Preston, Mrs Howell, Mrs Rollins and Mrs Cozens (TA)

Year 5 – Mrs Khalid, Miss Hurdman, Miss Murfin and Mrs Windsor (TA)

Year 6 – Miss Marston, Miss Press, Mrs Branson, Mrs King (TA) and Mrs Alcock (TA)

3EH will move in to Mrs Preston's class (4P)

3SH will move in to Mrs Howell's class (4H)

4P will move in to Miss Hurdman's class (5H)

4C will move in to Mrs Khalid's class (5K)

(I'm using '4C' for clarity for parents as I know there's been lots of change in Y4 this year)

5K will move in to Miss Press' class (6P)

5M will move in to Miss Marston's class (6M)

Mrs Kerr-Delworth, Mrs Rollins, Miss Murfin will be assigned mixed ability classes made up from 10 children in each of the main classes, and the same for Miss Branson, situation permitting, until her maternity leave by which time we will re-assess.

Over the coming weeks, we have planned opportunities for all children to meet their new teachers at least a couple of times via Zoom and there will be activities to support this transition within the Daily Doodles too.

Wider Opening of school for Y6

We were thrilled to welcome back 56 of our Y6 children to school this week for two days per week to complete their Y6 learning, participate in transition activities and have some fun with some socially distanced rites of passage too. It was immediately clear that they were delighted to be back and I know the staff team felt the same.

Unfortunately there will be some significant parts of our normal Leavers' events which we are simply unable to complete. We cannot invite parents into school, or hold any type of assembly / gathering to celebrate achievements. There are still some children and staff who we cannot safely get back to school yet, and we are really missing them.

We are very excited to announce that we have finalised plans for a SOCIALLY DISTANCED Party Day on the last day of term. We want to keep a few surprises for the children as to what might happen on that day, but wanted to let parents know of the change in attendance required.

6P Bubbles should attend school on Monday 13th July and Friday 17th July.

6M Bubbles should attend Thursday 16th July and Friday 17th July.

Please rest assured we have a plan to keep all Bubbles completely separate from each other, but allow them all to enjoy the same activities and experiences on the actual final day of Junior School. Fingers crossed for sunshine!

At 3pm on 17th July, we will invite parents (and siblings) of Y6 children to form a line 2m apart around the field, to enable our Y6 children to take part in a distanced Leavers' Parade.

Vacancies

You will no doubt have seen that we have two vacancies to join 'Team TRJS'. We are looking to appoint two enthusiastic and highly motivated teaching assistants (2 x 15h) to join our outstanding school for next year. Greater detail is available on Newsletter 36.

The closing date for applications is Thursday 25th June - please do encourage anyone you know who may be suitable for this post to apply.

Sorry it is such a long Newsletter this week, but there is lots of planning going on in school and we wanted to keep parents up to date with as much of the information as possible.

Please also find with the e-mail, two reports regarding **TT Rockstars Battles!**

Well done to Y3 who beat Y6 and Y4 who beat Y5!

Congratulations to Zachai K in Y3 - top scorer of the battle!

Our inter school Battle continues from 9am to 5pm daily until next Friday, we started in the lead, but have been knocked off the top and are falling further behind each day.

Please keep encouraging children to Battle on!

*Best wishes,
Mrs Sharpe*